DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 282 498 HE 020 325

AUTHOR Annis, Linda F.
TITLE Project START: A Case Study on Improving Study Skills in a Remedial Summer Entry Program Designed To Enable Students to Succeed in College.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Symposium on "Promoting Effective Studying" of the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Freshmen; Higher Education; *High Risk Students; Learning Motivation; Reading Skills; *Remedial Programs; Skill Development; Student Attitudes; *Study Habits; *Study Skills; *Summer Programs; Test Wiseness; Verbal Learning; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Ball State University IN

ABSTRACT

A study skills course offered through Project Start, a summer program for high-risk incoming college freshmen at Ball State University, Indiana, is described. While primarily designed for students who were denied regular admission because of low high-school rank and low Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, the program also allows previously academically disqualified students to demonstrate that they can earn at least a C average in an academically challenging program. Major topics addressed in the study techniques course include: modifying study behavior and increasing motivation to learn; a theory of verbal learning based on cognitive psychology; effective reading; benefiting from lectures, textbooks, and other media; special study techniques (e.g., mnemonics); test wiseness; and writing course papers and exams. Students are allowed to practice study techniques with materials from their courses. The Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA) is administered to students during the first and last weeks of the term. SSHA informs students of ways that their personal study habits and attitudes differ from those of students who earn high grades. Students in the study skills class receive feedback on their pretest and posttest SSHA scores. Student scores on the SSHA subscales for 1986 are discussed. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED282498

Project START: A Case Study On Improving Study Skills in a Remedial Summer Entry Program Designed to Enable Students to Succeed in College

Linda F. Annis

Ball State University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Linda F. Annis

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Linda F. Annis, Director
Center for Teaching and Learning
Burkhardt Building 310
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

Paper presented as part of a Symposium organized by William D. Rohwer, Jr. and John W. Thomas on "Promoting Effective Studying" at the Annual Meetings of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D. C., April, 1987.

HE 020 325

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Project START was instituted at Ball State University to help incoming college freshmen succeed in college through an unusual summer program. It was primarily designed to meet the needs of potential students at Ball State University who were denied regular admission because of low high school rank and low SAT scores. Project START also provides a second academic chance for previously academically disqualified students to demonstrate that they can earn at least a C average in an academically challenging program.

The summer of 1986 was the fourth year for Project START, and it has been generally successful in its stated aim of helping students succeed in college. The key to the program's success appears to be its stress on academic excellence. It is this factor which distinguishes Project START from a myriad of other summer bridge programs. In order to attain academic excellence, it employs five strategies:

1. Recruitment of a group of outstanding instructors who teach smaller classes and stress one-to-one attention for students.
2. Preparation by each instructor of a comprehensive course syllabus in which the purpose of the course, learning activities, and bases of evaluation are clearly delineated.
3. Provision of academic support services including curricular advising, tutorial assistance, career counseling, and library instruction.
4. Implementation of a program of pretesting and posttesting in each course to determine the gain scores of the students.
5. Implementation of a systematic evaluation of individual courses and the total program.

Students are informed that Project START is designed for graduates of accredited secondary schools who need remedial work in mathematics, reading, writing, or study skills. Other course options include history, physical education, biology, public speaking, classical culture, and philosophy. All faculty for Project START are individually recommended and selected by their department heads and the director of the program. The emphasis in the project is on excellence in teaching and small student-instructor ratios.

Students are told that Project START may be right for them because it offers important special features:

a head start in college
adjustment to campus life before the fall rush begins
cultural, social, and recreational activities
career counseling
personal attention in smaller classes

As part of the total program, I have been teaching a "Study Techniques for College Students" course for the past three years. There were 22 students enrolled in my course last summer. The class met four days a week for ten weeks from 7:00 - 7:50 a.m. which made it a definite challenge for me to keep student interested (and even awake!) at such an early hour.

The course was built on and utilized a textbook I wrote for the course entitled Study Techniques (1983). This course is described in greater detail in a recent article in Techniques (Annis, 1986). The seven major topics in both the textbook and course dealt with becoming a more effective student through modifying study behavior and increasing motivation to learn (through the use of time schedules, contingency

contracts for study behavior, and timing of sleep and study), a three-part theory of verbal learning based on cognitive psychology (pay attention, encode, and associate), effective reading, getting the most out of lectures, textbooks, and other media, some special study techniques resulting from the three-part theory (e.g., mnemonics, paragraph summaries, and key point cards), testwiseness, and writing course papers and exams. The emphasis throughout was on empirically-supported study techniques.

Course work was highly structured and directed by the instructor. Students were presented with recommended study techniques and given the opportunity to practice them both with special materials and with materials from their own courses. Thus every attempt was made to offer a course that satisfied the traits found to be empirically associated with student academic improvement (e.g., Groveman, Richards, & Caple, 1975). The Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA) (1967) was administered to the students during the first and last weeks of the term. Because factors other than scholastic aptitude test scores are important in determining academic success, this non-ability measure can be very helpful to students in predicting their academic achievement and in helping students profit more from their educational opportunities. Research has demonstrated that the SSHA is a useful predictor of academic achievement, and that it measures traits largely untouched by scholastic aptitude test scores.

Because one of the most important purposes of the SSHA is to help students become more aware of ways in which their personal study

habits and attitudes are different from those of students that earn high grades, all students in my class received immediate feedback on their pretest and posttest SSHA scores. I also discussed the results individually with each student.

The SSHA is made up of four subscales. Delay Avoidance measures "promptness in completing assignments and ability to resist distractions," Work Methods measures "use of effective procedures, skill, and efficiency in doing academic assignments," Teacher Approval measures "feelings and opinions about teachers, their classroom behavior, and their methods," and Education Acceptance measures "approval of educational objectives, practices, and requirements." The total score of Study Orientation provides "an overall measure of scholastic attitudes and beliefs." The percentile norms for the SSHA were based on 3,054 cases from students at nine different colleges.

The SSHA pretest and posttest results for my Project START class for Summer, 1986, were as follows:

	Mean Pretest Percentile Score	Mean Posttest Percentile Score
Delay Avoidance	25%	65%
Work Methods	20%	65%
Teacher Approval	25%	55%
Education Acceptance	25%	45%
Study Orientation Total Score	20%	60%

It was very gratifying to find that this course in study techniques had such a significant effect on the students' study habits and attitudes. These Project START students have made significant progress during only ten weeks in developing the kinds of study behaviors that research has demonstrated are associated with academic success.

The student evaluations of the course and instructor were very positive. On a scale of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree), the average student response was greater than four to statements such as "This course has helped me study effectively for other courses," "This course has improved my ability to learn," "Students are encouraged to apply what they have learned," and "Overall, this course is among the best I have taken."

These SSHA results also are supported by fall quarter enrollment data which indicated that 20 of 22 students enrolled in my Study Techniques course, and 94 of the total of 117 students enrolled in Project Start returned to attend fall classes. This is very significant retention in view of the high-risk nature of these students.

It is my hope, and that of the entire Project START staff, that the significant progress made by the students during the Summer of 1986, will lead to their long-term academic success. At the very least, these students are off to an excellent start.

Bibliography

Annis, L.F. (1983). Study Techniques. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown.

Annis, L.F. (1986). Improving study skills and reducing test anxiety in regular and low-achieving college students: The effects of a model course. Techniques, 2, 115-125.

Groveman, A.M., Richards, C.S., & Caple, R.B. (1975). Literature review, treatment manuals, and bibliography for study skills counseling and behavioral self-control approaches to improving study behavior. Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 5, 342 (MS. NO. 1128, 88 pp.).

Survey of study habits and attitudes (1967). New York: Psychological Corporation.